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What you should know about the
**MARKET CATTLE
IDENTIFICATION
PROGRAM**

*...for Brucellosis
and Tuberculosis
eradication*

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What is the Market Cattle Identification (MCI) program?

It is a program designed to identify cattle in market channels so that animals affected with brucellosis or tuberculosis can be traced back to the herd of origin and the herd freed of disease.

What happens if a diseased animal does not carry identification?

The herd will probably not be found and not freed of disease. The herd then remains a potential reservoir of infection and a threat to the livestock industry.

How does MCI benefit the programs to eradicate brucellosis and tuberculosis?

The MCI program offers a continuous check for these diseases at slaughter and greatly reduces the need for on-the-farm testing.

How does MCI work?

The MCI program consists of five basic steps:

1. Cattle are identified with approved numbered back tags at a farm, ranch, or first market.
2. Blood samples for brucellosis tests are obtained from cows and bulls at livestock markets or at slaughter plants. Cattle are examined for lesions of tuberculosis at slaughter by

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trained meat inspectors.

3. Results of brucellosis tests and examinations for tuberculosis are forwarded to State-Federal animal health officials in the State where the cattle originated.
4. Animals free of brucellosis and tuberculosis are credited to areas of origin. This eliminates the need for rounding up and blood testing most beef herds.
5. If brucellosis blood tests or examinations for tuberculosis indicate the presence of disease State, Federal, and local veterinarians work directly with the herd owner until the disease has been eradicated.

How is the identification of the blood samples or tuberculosis lesions maintained?

The numbers on the back tag applied to cattle are used to maintain the identification of the blood sample or tuberculosis lesion sent to the laboratory.

When are the animals identified and where is the back tag applied?

The identifying back tags are usually applied to the animal when they arrive at the livestock market or concentration point, and are often used as sale tags. Back tags are to be applied just behind the shoulder of the animal about 4 inches below the back-line.



Will all back-tagged animals be checked for tuberculosis and tested for brucellosis?

All slaughter cattle will be examined for lesions of tuberculosis. Cows and bulls will be blood sampled for brucellosis testing at markets or at slaughter.

When brucellosis reactors or suspected tuberculous animals are found, how will the back tag be used to locate the herd of origin?

A record is maintained of the back tags issued in each State. These tags can be easily traced to the State and market or place where the tags were applied. The records maintained at the market are then used to locate the herd of origin.

When the infected animals are found at slaughter, must the entire herd of origin be tested?

Yes, to determine if other animals in the herd are also infected.

Who can take part in the MCI program?

Everyone in the industry can participate. In fact, all cattlemen are urged to cooperate because participation will eliminate or greatly reduce the need for rounding up beef herds and conducting on-the-farm or ranch blood tests. Participation will shorten the time needed to successfully eradicate both brucellosis and tuberculosis.

Can animals be shipped direct to a slaughter plant and be identified under the MCI program?

Yes. To receive credit for your animals in maintaining brucellosis area status, however, owners should request that their animals be back tagged. All Federally inspected and most State inspected slaughter plants are participating in the MCI program.

How important is the MCI program in the eradication of brucellosis and tuberculosis?

The success of these eradication programs depends heavily on the MCI program. Properly identified cattle, back tagged in normal market channels, can be traced to their herds of origin with a minimum amount of delay. Other manmade identification items such as ear tags, tattoos, and brands are also used in tracing diseased animals. Tracing cattle requires teamwork by packers, cattle buyers, meat inspectors, veterinarians, and, most of all, by the producer.

How can I participate in the MCI program?

By consigning your cattle to markets that are participating in the MCI program, or by back tagging your cattle on the farm or ranch. You can obtain back tags from State or Federal animal health veterinarians. Make arrangements to obtain the back tags well in advance of shipping time.

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